The Open Court.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

Devoted to the Work of Conciliating Religion with Science.

No. 186. (Vol. V.—4) CHICAGO, MARCH 19, 1891. Two Dollars per Year. Single Copies, 5 Cts.

SHORT DISCUSSIONS AND CRITICISMS.

BY JOHN BURROUGHS.

I.

How inevitable that the early races and peoples should have subordinated the sun and moon etc. to the earth. They are clearly the servants and attendants of the earth. They are placed there in the heavens to give us light and warmth. As the sun sinks towards the horizon a change seems actually to come over him. His light grows thin and yellow. His day's work is done and he is going to rest, and in the morning will rise refreshed and strong. In winter the winds and the storms seem to drive him to the south, and he is feeble and disheartened.

Until science enlightens us we never dream that the sunset or sunrise is not a solar phenomenon, that these changes relate entirely to our little planet, that winter and summer, day and night, etc., are not universal phenomena, but local, and as it were, personal phases of our planetary life.

Now the Semitic cosmogony upon which our theology is founded is the outcome of this same feeling, this same geocentric conception of the universe. It magnifies the individual into the universal. The *London Spectator* in replying to Frederic Harrison, who thinks the Christian faith could not possibly have been first originated in an age that had a heliocentric astronomy, sets forth and enforces the opinion that our astronomical science has not in any vital respect altered or impaired the validity of the theological conceptions of the Jewish and Christian revelations. The *Spectator* fails to see that theSemitic dramaturgy sprang out of the colossal egotism of the early races, the races who considered themselves as the special centre and object of creations, an egotism that science tends directly to overthrow. It is true the old prophets and biblical writers sought to humble and belittle man in the presence of the hosts of the starry heavens, but this was only a momentary reaction from their gigantic egoism, which made Jehovah so solicitous about his chosen people. But this is not the point. The point is that the Copernican system of astronomy gives us a conception of the order and harmony of the universe and of the *physical* insignificance of our planet and its subordination to other bodies that is utterly inconsistent with our Semitic theology. The two are not homogeneous; they spring from entirely different standpoints. The Israelites may have been God's chosen people, and this earth of ours may be the apple of his eye among the worlds, but the tendency of the study of science is to utterly uproot such notions. Science liberalises and impersonalises. To the impartial student of history all peoples are God's people, and all worlds alike the scenes of his power. In the light of modern astronomy what becomes of the notion that the heavens are above us, far away, and are of a higher and purer creation, or Hell beneath us, that the earth is corrupted or blighted by the Fall? Kindred notions of one theology. Do we not know that the earth is a star in the heavens, as incorruptible and undefiled as the rest? and that all worlds are kindred and of our stuff, that there is no up and no down, no high or no low in the universe? The lightning does not come out of heaven, nor the rain out of heaven, but out of the clouds. An eclipse is not a warning or a calamity, but purely a natural event, merely the lunar or the terrestrial shadow. Our actual physical smallness and insignificance is what science reveals; our grandeur and importance is what the eye and the untutored mind behold.

Science is impersonal; it tends to belittle and diffuse man; theology and literature tend to exalt him, and concentrate him, and set him above all. Mythology, theology, philosophy, literature, all exaggerate man and distort his true relations to the universe; but in these latter ages comes science and shows man what he really is, where he belongs in the scheme of the whole and what an insect of an hour, an ephemera of a moment he really is, and what a bubble is the world he inhabits. In a late religious work by Julia Wedgewood I find this remark:

> "When once Galileo and Newton had forced the world to recognise that Heaven, if it was anywhere was everywhere, the moral took a new direction. The antithesis of Heaven and Earth vanished from the inward as well as from the outward world. Human nature became interesting for its own sake."

II.

One of the most liberal minded doctors of divinity allowed himself the other day to speak slightingly of the "vaunted scientific method," as if the scientific method was some new fangled notion that had recently

become current, some patent process or labor saving machine for obtaining truth. As if men had not always used the scientific method, as if it was not as natural to the mind as walking to the body. When we sift evidence, or search into the truth or falsity of any objective proposition we inevitably use the scientific method. It is the method of proceeding from cause to effect, of proving all things, of testing every link in the chain which binds one fact to another. It has come into prominence in our time because of the great advance of physical science. Men are applying this method to questions that heretofore have been considered above its reach. Theological questions are brought within its range, much to the disgust of the theologians. Of many things that have been taken for granted men are beginning to ask, Are they true? and are applying the tests of this kind of truth. All the events and occurrences recorded in the Bible, are subject to the inquiry, Are they true? If we apply to them the scientific method what is the result? James Martineau, for instance, makes use of the scientific method when he shows so convincingly that the Synoptic Gospels must all have been derived from one common source. If these records, he says, were independent accounts of the words and doings of Jesus by the disciples whose names they bear, it is incredible that they should agree so closely in all their details; the different writers would have witnessed and would have recorded different scenes and events. Only of one-thirteenth of the days of the public life of Jesus do we have any record in the Synoptic Gospels. Were these gospels each an original, or the record of independent witnesses, we should have had the events and the utterances of Jesus on more days, since the apostles would not all have been absent and all present at precisely the same time.

The scientific method can no more be ignored or disputed than can the multiplication table. It is as old as the reason of man and is fallible only as man's reason is fallible. It cannot be applied to matters of religious faith, because we here enter a region where proof or verification is not possible.

III.

In the ancient temple of Apollo at Delphi lay a stone, the Omphalos, or navel stone, supposed to mark the centre of the earth. And sure enough, it did mark the centre of the earth, though not exactly under the conditions the ancients believed. The ancients supposed the earth had one centre, like a plain or any irregular surface, or as the navel is the centre of the body; but we know now that the earth is a sphere, and that any point upon its surface may serve as its centre. In like manner every religion thinks itself the one final and supreme religion,—thinks itself the centre of the world; and for that race and that people it is the centre of the world; their life, their history, their development hinges upon it. Our navel stone, Christianity, is the centre of the world for us, and the Buddhist's, the Mohammedan's is the centre of the world for him. The religion of Apollo was the central fact in the history of Greece. There may be any number of true, though opposing and contradictory religions. There may be any number of centres to the infinite. Mathematics, the exact sciences, are always and everywhere the same, but religion is a sentiment, and the forms in which it clothes itself are as various as changeable as fleeting as the forms of summer clouds.

IV.

The whole order of the universe favors virtue and is against vice. Things have come to what they are, man has arrived at what he is, the grass and flowers clothe the fields, the trees thrive and bear wholesome fruit, the air is sweet and water quenches thirst through the action of the same principles by which we see that virtue is good and vice bad. Things have clashed and warred and devoured each other through past eternities and out of the adjustment, the balance at which they have at last arrived, we see that virtue is to be sought and vice to be shunned; we see that a good man's life is the fruit of the same balance and proportion as that which makes the fields green and the corn ripen. It is not by some fortuitous circumstance, the especial favor of some god, but by living in harmony with immutable laws through which the organic world has been evolved, that he is what he is.

V.

To say that the world or the order of nature is reasonable is like saying how well the body fits the skin. The order of nature fits our faculties and appears reasonable to us, not because it is shaped to them, but because they are shaped to it, just as the eye is shaped to the light or the ear to the waves of sound. Nature is first and man last. Things are good to us because our constitutions are shaped to them; no absolute goodness is argued. Fluids might seem like solids to beings differently constituted. Were the laws of the physical world designed to bring about certain results, or do the results simply follow? Shall we say that the inclination of the earth's axis to the plane of its orbit, is in order that there may be a change of season? or does the change of the season simply follow as an inevitable consequence? Is the air adapted to the lungs or the lungs to the air? Of course the lesser or secondary fact is always adjusted to the greater or primary fact. The structure of a bird, the mechanism of its wings and feathers, etc., is all adapted with the nicest accuracy to the one purpose of flying, but

is there anything here we can properly call design? The wing we know is the result of slow adaptation and modification, and not of anything like deliberate contrivance. God did not will that certain creatures should fly, and so proceed to make them wings and feathers. With disuse the wing disappears or becomes rudimentary. Use therefore makes the wing. What makes use?

Some mysterious impulse imprinted upon the organisation of which we know nothing. What I am trying to say is, there is nothing like man's ways, nothing artificial in nature—nothing in the finite that is copied from the infinite. Will, design, purpose, are partial terms. God is all will, all purpose, just as the sphere is all form, that is holds all form, and yet is of itself of no form. The circle goes in all directions, and yet in no direction.

VI.

Behold how men have puzzled themselves over miracles, and what ingenuity they have shown in explaining them; but it were better had the puzzles never been made. After the theologian has explained so clearly how they happen, the previous question still haunts us *do they happen?* Principal Telloch's explanation of them seems a very simple one. Miracles, he says, are simply the working of a Higher Will so moving the "hidden springs of nature that a new issue arises on given circumstances. The ordinary issue is supplanted by a higher issue." In other words, have given the same conditions *unlike* results may follow by reason of the interference of this assumed Higher Will. But are we not constantly dogged by the question, What proof have we that this Higher Will does so interfere? In assuming that it interferes are we not begging the whole question? One of Plutarch's natural questions was "What is the reason that pebble stones and leaden bullets thrown into the water made it more cold?" and after he was given the reason, we still want to know, do these things make water more cold?

The belief in miracles is a remnant of paganism, which the race is fast outgrowing. The religious sense of mankind is fast rising superior to all thaumaturgical aids. The conception of the forces of nature as constant, the view of the universe as a vital whole, softly but inexorably bound by the law of cause and effect in all its parts, is a much more noble and satisfying view to me at least, than that which has been foisted upon the world by an antiquated theology.

VII.

Think of the state of mind of the world when people actually believed in the devil,—not believed that they believed in him as now-a days, but when they believed in him as really as they believed in heat and cold, night and day, life and death; when doctors and theologians guarded their mouths while exorcising the evil spirit lest he jump down their throats. If a man inhaled a little fly by accident his reason might be unhinged by terror lest he had swallowed the devil. The king of Spain used to sleep between two monks to keep off the devil. What a dreadful hue was given to life by this belief; in what a constant state of apprehension and alarm men lived! The insane were of course possessed of the devil; all evil, storms, pestilence, disease, everything malodorous was the work of evil spirits.

VIII.

Christianity amounts to little without something to back it up, without integrity of character and fealty to truth. You may put on a varnish of religion as thick as you please, if the stuff beneath is poor, is shaky or full of knots, the result is poor. Our final reliance is always upon the man himself and not upon his creed. We care little what he believes or disbelieves, so that he believes in sobriety, justice, charity, and the imperativeness of duty, so that he speak the truth and shame the devil, and I reckon it is about so with God himself. What mankind, in their better selves love, can hardly fail to be acceptable to him. Atheism, itself, if sincere, and honest, is more in keeping with the order of the world than a cowardly and lukewarm deism. Belief in Christ will not save a man; he must be saved already or he is lost, saved by his character and conscience, or there is no material for belief in Christ to work upon. How many people we see who freely and heartily subscribe to the thirty-nine articles, yet in whom we have no confidence, and with whom we want no intimate relations. And it is not because they are hypocrites: it is because they are incapable of truthfulness or manliness. Belief is not saving, but character is. How shall we get character then; how deepen and fertilise the groundwork of men's natures? It cannot be done in a moment: conversion will not do it. When a man of force and integrity joins the church, the church has an acquisition; but when a slippery, inconstant, and equivocating person joins it, it has put a brick in its walls that will not stand the weather. The frosts and the rains will crumble it, and the structure be weakened. Character is of slow growth; it cannot be made to order; the most that can be done to encourage or stimulate it, is to lay the emphasis where it belongs, to insist upon things that are essential, to stop trying to convert men to a creed, but to open their eyes to a law, show them the penalties of fickleness, falsehood, intemperance, unchastity, riotous living, etc., not because they contravene some command or precept of the Bible, or because they endanger their chances of felicity in some other world, but because they contravene the laws

through which all growth, and health, and wholeness come, and endanger their well-being here and now. The preacher cannot create force and integrity off-hand in his hearer by praising force and integrity, but a great deal is gained when a love for these things is awakened. Men are made manly by an appeal to their manliness; noble sentiments are begotten by noble sentiments; when the true patriot speaks everybody is patriotic; when the real Christian appears everybody loves Christianity. I once heard Fred Douglass say the way to keep a man out of the mud was to black his boots, and the first step towards making a man manly is to convince him he has a capacity for manliness. Show him that religion is not some far away thing that he must get, but a vital truth which he lives whenever he does a worthy thing.

Religion, as something special and extra, which a man may or may not have, and which is attached to certain beliefs and ceremonies, has had its day. Whatever it may have been in the past, it is no longer a power to mould men's characters and shape their lives. That a man professes religion is no longer a recommendation to him, in applying for any place in the business or political world. It does not inspire any more confidence in him as a man, or as a trusted servant, but creates a certain presumption against him. He may be a wolf in sheep's clothing: watch him closely. A commonplace poet derives great advantages from the stock forms and measures which he uses; these are the garments of mighty bards; let him discard them and his littleness and poverty will appear. So a man often hides his mean and selfish nature in loud professions of religion; let him drop these and stand upon his own merits, and we shall not be imposed upon. When such an one fails we excuse the matter by saying, "Well it was not the fault of the religion, but of the man." The fault is in attaching any religious value to forms and beliefs—in having any cloaks of this kind in which a scoundrel may masquerade. If a man professes to be a legal or medical or scientific expert, and is not, he is soon found out. This is not a cloak, but a sword, and if he cannot wield it, he is soon exposed. But a man may profess Christianity to-day and rob a bank to-morrow. Probably no honest mind ever gave its assent to the literal truth of the thirty-nine articles, or to any of the various creeds, until its sympathy and its interest had been brought over by an appeal to the emotions. The creed is an after-thought; it is the terms which the conscience makes with the reason after the reason has surrendered. In assenting to it the convert thinks he is only assenting to the truth of his religion, or to the genuineness of the emotion he has experienced. Mayhap by and by he discovers that he has assented to a set of propositions, which standing naked and formal as they do, divested of the spiritual warmth and magnetism, and the incentives to noble and heroic living which they had in the fervid exhortations of Paul, or in the calm sweetness of James, and which his reason alone is now to lay hold of, he is shocked and repelled, and is in danger of losing all his religion with the discovery of the unreasonableness of his creed. This is unfortunate, because the only thing real and valuable in religion, the only thing saving in it, is the emotion of Godliness, the love of Christ, of tenderness, gentleness, purity, mercy, truth. Without these, religion is nothing but a name, and with them the assent of the understanding to a lot of formal propositions about the plans and purposes of the Eternal, about the trinity, or the atonement, or original sin, etc., has nothing to do. There is no connection between these things. Religion is not a matter of reason or of belief, any more than poetry is. It is a sentiment.

THE RÔLE OF IDEAS IN THE CONSTITUTION OF PERSONALITY.*

BY TH. RIBOT.

NOTHING is more frequent or better known than the momentary dispossession of personality through some fixed and intense idea. So long as this idea occupies the consciousness, we might without much exaggeration say that it constitutes the individual. The obstinate pursuit of any problem, invention or research in all their various forms, represents a mental state in which the entire personality has been drained for the benefit of a single idea. Such an one is, to use a common expression, absent, that is automatic. Here there is an abnormal state, implying a rupture of equilibrium. Numberless current anecdotes concerning either rational or chimerical inventors bear witness to the fact. And incidentally let us observe, that every fixed idea is at the bottom a sentiment or a fixed passion. At all times some desire, love, hatred, or interest will support the idea, and impart to it its intensity, stability, tenacity. Whatever we may plead to the contrary, ideas are always in the service of passions; at the same time they resemble some masters, who actually obey while believing that they always rule.

Whatever may be the result, this state is but a mental hypertrophy, and people are perfectly right, when in identifying the inventor and his work, they designate the one by the other; in this instance work is equivalent to personality.

Up to this point we have no change of personality, but a simple deviation from the normal type, —or, what is better, the schematic type,—in which by hypothesis the organic, emotional, and intellectual elements would form a perfect consensus. We thus

* Translated from the French (*Diseases of Personality* Chap. III. 4.) by

have hypertrophy at one point and atrophy at other points, by virtue of the law of compensation or of organic equilibrium. And now let us consider the morbid cases. With the exception of certain artificial changes, produced during hypnotism, it is difficult to find many cases of derangement the incontestable starting point of which is an idea. Among changes of personality, from an intellectual cause, it appears to me we may class the facts relating to lycanthropy and zoanthropy, in all their forms, formerly of frequent occurrence, but now very rare. Still, in all cases of this kind * of which we have an authentic record, the mental debility in the lycanthrope is so great, almost verging on stupidity, that we might almost be tempted to look upon it as a case of retrogression; a return toward the form of animal individuality. Let us add, that inasmuch as these cases are complicated with visceral disorders, cutaneous and visual hallucinations, it is not easy to see, whether they are the effects of a preconceived idea, or whether they themselves produce it. We must remark, however, that lycanthropy has at times been epidemic, which is to say, that at least in imitating subjects, it must have originated in some fixed idea. Finally, this type of disease disappeared, when people no longer believed in it, that is to say, when the idea that a man is a wolf, could no longer fix itself in the brain of an individual, and make him act accordingly.

The only perfectly clear cases of ideal transformation of personality, are those of men who believe themselves women, and of women who believe themselves men, without any sexual anomaly justifying that metamorphosis. With subjects who are possessed, demonomaniacs, the influence of an idea also seems initial or preponderating. It frequently acts by contagion upon the exorcists themselves. To quote only one instance of this, Father Surin, who for so long a time was concerned in the notorious affair the Ursuline Nuns of Loudun, felt within himself two souls, and sometimes as it seems, even three.†

In other words, the transformations of personality by effect of an idea are not of a very frequent occurrence; and this is a fresh proof of what we have again and again repeated, that personality rises from below. It is in the highest nervous centres that personality attains its unity, affirms itself with full consciousness; in them it completes itself. If through some inverse mechanism personality descends from above to below, it will remain superficial, precarious, momentary.

The creation of artificial personalities with hypnotised subjects affords an excellent proof of the above; and to this effect M. Ch. Richet has published very abundant and precise observations,* which I shall briefly quote. By turns they make the hypnotised subject (usually a woman) believe that she is a peasant-girl, an actress, a general, an archbishop, a nun, a sailor, a little girl, etc., and the subject will play all these parts to the degree of perfect illusion. Here the psychological data are perfectly clear. In this state of provoked somnambulism, the real personality remains intact; the organic, emotional, intellectual elements have not undergone any important change; but all remain in a potential state. An imperfectly understood condition of nervous centres, an arrest of function, prevents them from passing into action. An idea is evoked by way of suggestion, and at once, through the mechanism of association, it excites analogous states of consciousness, and no others; and with them,—always by association,—appropriate gestures, acts, words, and sentiments. In this manner there is constituted a personality external to the real personality, composed of borrowed and automatic elements. Experiments of this kind clearly show what an idea may achieve when freed from all control, and reduced to its own power and destitute of the support and co-operation of the individual in its totality.

In certain cases of incomplete hypnotism a dualism is produced. Dr. North, professor of physiology at Westminster Hospital, says, when speaking of the period during which he was affected by the fixed look: "I was not unconscious, but it seemed to me that I was existing in double. I imagined that within there existed another ego, perfectly alive to all that happened, but which did not care to interfere with the acts of the external ego, or to control them. The repugnance or incapacity of this internal ego to control the external ego seemed to increase in proportion as the situation was further prolonged."

But, would it be possible to suppress this true, internal personality? Can the real character of the individual be reduced to naught or to the point of actu-

* See Calmeil: *De la folie considérée sous le point de vue pathologique, philosophique, historique et judiciaire.* Vol. I, Bk. III, Ch. II, §§ 9, 16, 17; Bk. IV, Ch. II, § 1.

† P. Surin left a detailed report of his own mental state: *Histoire des diables de Loudun*, p. 217 and following. "I am not able to describe to you what is going on within me at such a time (he alludes to the time when the demon passes from the body of the possessed woman into his own), and how that spirit unites itself with mine, without depriving me either of consciousness or of the freedom of my soul, yet becoming like another ego of myself, and as if I had two souls, of which one is dispossessed of its body, and of the use of its organs, and compelled to keep aloof, looking merely upon the doings of the other intruding soul. The two spirits wrestle together in the same field, which is the body, and the soul is as though it was divided. According to the one side of its ego, the soul is the subject of the diabolical impressions, and according to the other side it is the subject of the movements proper to it, or that God gives to it. When—through the movement of one of these two souls—I wish to make a sign of the cross upon somebody's lips, the other soul very quickly turns my hand and seizes my finger to bite it furiously with the teeth. . . . When I wish to speak, I am stopped short; at table I cannot raise a morsel of food to my mouth; at confession I suddenly forget my sins and I feel the demon coming and going within me as in his own house."

* *Revue Philosophique*, March 1883. M. Richet has published more recent observations in his book *L'homme et l'intelligence*, p. 539 and 541. See also Carpenter: *Mental Physiology*, p. 562 and following.

ally transforming itself into its contrary? We cannot doubt this possibility; the persisting authority of the operator is indeed able to effect this result, after a more or less prolonged resistance. Thus M. Ch. Richet has impressed with radical republican ideas a lady known for her ultra-Bonapartist opinions. Braid, after hynotising a strict teetotaller, several times repeated to him that he was drunk. "This affirmation being also corroborated by a sensation of staggering (produced by way of muscular suggestion), and it was amusing to behold him divided between this imposed idea and the conviction resulting from his ordinary habits." This momentary metamorphosis however has nothing alarming about it. As M. Richet justly remarks, "in these curious modifications the changes that take place are only in the external form of the being, in habit and general attitudes and not in individuality properly so called." As to the question, whether by means of reiterated suggestions, we might not eventually produce in susceptible subjects a genuine modification of character, it is a problem that experience alone can solve.

Perhaps this is a favorable opportunity to call attention to the phenomenon known as *disappearance of personality*, which the mystics of all epochs and of all countries have described according to their own experience, often in the most glowing language.* Pantheistic metaphysicians without reaching the state of ecstasy have also spoken of a state in which the spirit thinks itself "under the form of eternity"; appears to itself as beyond time and space, free from all contingent modality, one with the infinite. This psychological phenomenon although rare must not be forgotten. I take it to be the absolute dispossession of mental activity effected by a single idea (positive to mystics, negative to empirics), but which through its high degree of abstraction, and its absence of determination and limit, contradicts and excludes all individual sentiment. But let one single sensation however ordinary be perceived and the entire illusion will be destroyed.

*Of these descriptions I shall only cite one—the nearest to us by language and time. "It seems to me that I have become a statue on the banks of the river of time, and am attending the celebration of some mystery from whence I shall come forth old or without age. I feel as it were anonymous, impersonal; my eye is fixed as in death: my mind is vague and universal, as nihility or the absolute. I am in suspense; as if non-existent. In these moments it seems to me that my consciousness withdraws into its eternity . . . . it perceives itself even in its substance, superior to every form containing its past, present, and future; a vacuum that encloses everything; an invisible and prolific medium; virtuality of a world divesting itself of its own existence, in order to lay hold of itself again in its own pure inwardness. In these sublime instants the soul has re-entered into itself; and having returned to the state of indetermination it is reabsorbed beyond the bounds of its own life, it becomes again a divine embryo. Everything is effaced, dissolved, distended; changed into its primitive state, re-immersed in the original fluidity, without shape, angles, or definite design. This state is contemplation and not stupor; it is neither painful, nor joyous, nor sad; it is without all special sentiment and beyond all finished thought. It is the consciousness of being, and the consciousness of the latent omnipossibility at the base of this being. Such is the sensation of the spiritual infinite." (Amiel, *Journal intime*, 1856.)

To sum up: The states of consciousness that are called ideas, are only a secondary factor in the constitution and changes of personality. The idea certainly plays a part, but not a preponderating one. These results agree with what psychology has long since taught, namely, that ideas have an objective character. Hence it follows, that they cannot express the individual in the same proportion as his desires, sentiments, and passions.

THE MAYFLOWER.

Epigæa repens. (Close to the ground.)

THE *Epigæa repens* must have been the first flower of Spring to greet the Plymouth pilgrims in the month of April after their winter on the bleak Massachusetts shores.

It was called by them, and has ever since been called by their descendants, the Mayflower, in honor of the vessel that brought them over, and in tender recollection of the flowers of May in the old country. Yet it cannot claim full possession of this name, which is given to so many other flowers in different localities.

By what chance it has come, in many places, to be called Trailing Arbutus, I know not, for although both plants belong to the Sub-order of Ericineæ, or the proper Heath family, yet this plant belongs not to the tribe Arbuteæ, but to Andromedeæ, (see Gray's Manual,) and the characters and expressions of the two species are very different, while its own botanical name Epigæa beautifully describes its constant habit of clinging closely to the ground.

My heart always thrills with pain when I hear it called arbutus, and my inward protest has taken shape in the following verses.

We may not call our flower that dear ship's name,
Which brought the sacred pilgrims to our shore,
Since others may that honor fairly claim,
Which add their beauty to the spring's rich store,
While our sweet blossom comes forestalling May
And hastening summer on her tardy way.

What heart-thrills woke among that pilgrim band,
When first by fragrant breath its home they found,
And for its welcome to their chosen land
They blessed the plant that closely "hugs the ground."
For Epigæa is its rightful name
By which it may the heather's kindred claim.

Arbutus is its cousin; loftier bred,
It rises oft a fair and stately tree
Where Caucasus uprears its cloud-capped head,
Or California grants it nurture free.
Give to the noble tree its rightful dower,
But not its name unto our pilgrim flower.

A modest blossom, it still "hugs the ground"
Though Commonwealths have risen on its soil,
Still in the solemn pine woods is it found,
To bless the children of the sons of toil;

By mount or sea it ever is the same,
For Epigæa is its rightful name.

In autumn budded, braving winter's snows,
Which turn to sweetness in its sheltering heart,
The chilliest wind New England's spring time knows,
Blights not the blossom with its icy dart,
But opening to the sun's first warming ray,
It brings the promise of the harvest day.

O Mayflower true, thou heralded the May,
And breathed God's message to that pilgrim band,
"Look hearts no more beyond the sheltering bay,
"Your home is here and this your chosen land,
"Cling tight like me, God's blessings still abound
"In humble hearts, that ever hug the ground."

Let kingly Laurel crown luxuriant June,
The Rose and Lily gladden Summer's day,
Aster and Golden Rod the harvest moon
And gold Chrysanthemum Thanksgiving day,
In wayward April most of all renowned
Is Epigæa close unto the ground.,

Cling close true hearts, unto our pilgrim land,
Though venturous feet may tread the spreading West,
And when amid its lofty pines you stand,
There still you find the flower that loves them best,
Bend low and breathe its fragrance spread around,
And Epigæa bless that ever hugs the ground.

E. D. C.

CURRENT TOPICS.

Did you ever read that amusing chapter in Ivanhoe which describes the meeting between Friar Tuck and the disguised King Richard at the friar's hermitage in the forest where the king had lost his way? It is worth reading, especially in Lent. The king having, not without some difficulty, obtained shelter for the night in the friar's hut, is offered parched peas and cold water for supper, the anchorite assuring him that he had nothing better in the hermitage, and that he himself was limited to such food by the rules of his order and the vow that he had made. The fat and rosy appearance of the friar made the king suspicious, and after a a good deal of mutual banter, the hermit was compelled to produce from a secret cupboard a savory venison pie, and several quarts of wine, on which he and his guest made merry. There is refined satire in the story, but the jovial good nature of the hermit, and his courageous violation of the oppressive game laws, redeem the impudent hypocrisy which prompted him to take the monastic vows and adopt the garb of austerity that he might gratify more easily his taste for luxury and his passion for self-indulgence. The moral of the story is obvious, and the application of it might be made useful now. Society assumes the forms of lent as Tuck assumed his cowl, to spiritualise venison pie, and make piety a pleasure.

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There is one keen detective among us who is not to be deceived by the odor of sanctity, nor by metaphysical sackcloth and ashes. The name of him is "Business." He knows the etiquette of lent; and the ceremonial sham of it helps him to sell his merchandise. How this mockery of the lenten fast grins at us from the shops where dainty eatables are sold, and where upon the walls and windows we may see this ironical advertisement, "Lenten Delicacies." It is easy enough to observe the forms of the holy season, while we cheat the spirit of it by wearing sackcloth made of silk, and fasting thrice a day on "lenten delicacies," artistically cooked and seasoned, so that the fast may be a feast. The palate of the epicure tingles with anticipated gustation, as he reads in the newspapers ingenious recipes for cooking luxurious lenten food, dishes delightful to the appetite of Apicius, bills of fare that represent the contradiction and the travesty of lent, the counterfeit imitation and caricature of the forty days fast in the wilderness. The gospel, according to the four hundred, patronises lent by an economy of balls and parties, but makes it a religious excuse for a change of luxuries, that stimulate pleasure by variety. This false pretense of keeping lent while evading all its obligations, like other affectations of religion, gradually eliminates truth from the character, and makes insincerity a habit and a fashion.

* * *

Not in the formalism of religion only, do we see the respectability of cant and dissimulation but pharisaism overflows the churches and saturates both politics and business. It is becoming an axiom in all of them that duplicity is essential to success. The famous game of euchre in which the heathen Chinee concealed more aces and bowers than Bill Nye and Truthful James, has recently been imitated in a three-cornered game played in the United States Senate by Senators Plumb, Edmunds, and Morrill. In this interesting affair each of the contestants proved himself to be proficient in "ways that are dark and in tricks that are vain." Mr. Plumb having lost the game, brought the matter before the Senate, and complained that having stacked the cards for his own purposes, he had been caught with guile, and actually outwitted and outswindled by the other two. He sorrowfully said that when the McKinley bill was before the senate he had voted to sweeten it a little by a clause giving to the people of Vermont a bounty of two cents a pound on all the maple sugar they could make; but he had done this "with intent to deceive"—the legislature of Vermont. He had voted thus against his conscience to help Senator Morrill, who was then a candidate before the Vermont legislature for another term in the senate; but it was distinctly understood and agreed between the parties that after Mr. Morrill had made his calling and election sure, the bounty on maple sugar was to be stricken from the bill by the conference committee; instead of which, Mr. Morrill having been elected, and the bill being in conference, Senator Edmunds broke the agreement and actually wrote a letter saying that if the bounty on maple sugar were stricken out he would vote against the bill. So, as the vote of the Vermont senators could not be spared, additional saccharine was given to Vermont sap by a bounty of two cents a pound for all the sugar it might yield. No complaint would have been made, were it not that when Mr. Plumb attempted to get some bounty for the sorghum sugar of Kansas, Mr. Morrill opposed it, "Hence those tears."

* * *

Last Sunday, the pastor of the largest Baptist congregration in Chicago, preached on the subject of a personal devil, and proved, to his own satisfaction at least, and probably to the satisfaction of his hearers, that Satan is a real character with hoofs and horns, going about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The learned preacher, a Doctor of Divinity, having special knowledge of the subject, refuted the modern heresy that Satan is a myth, a mere name for the principle of evil, the ideal representative of darkness and of lies. He declared him to be an intelligent personality, whose envious ambition it is to defeat the plan of salvation by seducing human souls into his own service, and to their own perdition. The origin, the mission, the attributes, and prerogatives of the devil, are matters of controversy among Doctors of Divinity, and because of their confusion of opinion, some persons would abolish him altogether by denying his existence. The evidence that he is here amongst us is too strong to be resisted, and therefore it is better to acknowledge him and convert him. This is a holier work for Doctors of Divinity than scolding him. The sermon above referred to, being under discussion in a Baptist family, a young lady who is a member of the

church in good standing, was asked the pointed question, "Do you believe in a personal devil?" She answered, "O dear, yes: I know several right here in Chicago." She spoke better than she knew. The devil "Want," for instance, is the parent of a good many personal devils, and by abolishing him we shall easily convert them. There is hope even for Satan; and his conversion is not outside the plan of salvation.

* * *

A strange blending of Christianity and Paganism was exhibited a few days ago, when the Queen of England baptised a ship of war with wine; and with ceremonial words that sounded like incantations launched this iron corsair upon the sea, bidding it go forth on its malevolent mission of devastation and death. How thin must be the bit of civilised veneering that covers our native savageness, when even in England, whose missionaries with fanatical courage carry the bible everywhere, and preach its gospel to benighted souls from Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand, it is thought consistent and congenial that such a swaggering buccaneer should be commissioned by a woman, a venerable and virtuous lady seventy-two years old! With lofty phrase, and form that resemble the baptismal service in the prayer-book she named this ugly rover after her own son, the christening being done in pagan fashion by wine sprinkled on the forehead of the ship, henceforward to be known in mischief as the "Royal Arthur." But the performance was not Pagan altogether, because right there, by the very side of the Queen, aiding, assisting, and abetting the act of consecration, was a minister of the Christian gospel, offering prayer, giving grace and benediction to the sea monster, and invoking theological potency for its gunpowder and its guns. When the great cannon in the forts, and on the attendant ships in the bay, saluted the christening with diabolic thunder, the air became poisoned with a brimstone flavor, like atmosphere imported from the home of the condemned.

M. M. Trumbull

CORRESPONDENCE.

ABOLISH WOMAN SLAVERY.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

I doubt whether any one believing strictly in the ethics of monogamy, nor yet his philosophical opponent of the varietist school will be satisfied with your leading articles on "Sexual Ethics." For people who are in deadly earnest about the way other people should live, are ill satisfied with concessions, either to themselves or their enemies. Therefore I suspect that instead of having poured oil on the troubled waters, you have rather added fuel to flame. While I have no particular interest in seeing the varietist side of the argument uppermost, I would prefer to see a stronger presentation of it, given from their own standpoint, than that allowed by the author in question. That standpoint would be necessarily a theoretical one, and the same from which any logical free-lover (monogamic or otherwise) would look. I can imagine such a person saying: "But sir, your whole argument rests upon the recognition of a monstrous fact, viz. that woman is, and always has been, *property*, that the present basis of marriage is purely an economy of man, in which child-bearing and rearing is the function of the wife, in return for which the husband protects and supports her, as he protects and supports his horses; that in the contest between several forms of sexual association, polygamic, polyandric, and monogamic, *all based on this same economic foundation*, monogamy has produced the best results. Very well. Concerning the recognition of the fact I have no quarrel with the author of those articles. On the contrary, the sooner it is admitted the better. But a most serious debate arises when he endeavors to perpetuate this ideal of property in women.

He who faces the east, knows that two great factors in economic evolution, apparently warring, but really in harmony with each other, the socialisation of industry and the equalisation of liberty, are rapidly transforming all human relations. This word human includes *woman*. The equalisation of liberty means the deathblow to property in wives, and the socialisation of industry means the possibility of bread-and-butter independence, that is the guarantee of equality. What then? The rearing of children, the constant, destructive sacrifice of woman's self-hood, necessitated by our much lauded family-life, will cease to constitute the *totale* of her existence. Higher than being a mother (any animal may be that), she will be first a human being. Now, the question between variety and single affection may indeed begin to be settled. But no argument which will apply to justify the monogamy of the present, can have any weight for or against a system of marriage whose basis must be that of a contract between equals for love's sake, not the transfer of a piece of property from a father to a husband.

Like the dissolving colors of a bubble, the old economy of society is changing, melting, going before our eyes. Are we then justified in holding up an ideal to the future, which was born in the barbarisms of the past. Do you not thus contend in supporting the wife-slavery of the individual family, by reasons necessarily drawing their strength from a dying system?

How much farther this might develop I leave to the enthusiastic varietist. For I myself believe strongly in *laissez-faire* in morals as in economy and am not over-concerned about the triumph of either system, contending only for unlimited competition between the conflicting theories: that is what I understand by *free love*.

Enterprise, Kansas. V. de Cleyre.

THE OPEN COURT.

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY BY

THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING CO.

TERMS THROUGHOUT THE POSTAL UNION:

$2.00 PER YEAR. $1.00 FOR SIX MONTHS.

AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, AND TASMANIA, $2.50 PER YEAR.

All communications should be addressed to

THE OPEN COURT,

(Nixon Building, 175 La Salle Street,)

P. O. DRAWER F. CHICAGO, ILL.

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